

February 17, 2013

The Honorable Lee Randall, Chairman
House Agriculture Committee
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

RE: HB 495-- Provide for Rabies Vaccination

Dear Chairman Randall and Members of House Agriculture Committee:

On behalf of RiverStone Health, Yellowstone County's public health organization, I urge your favorable consideration of HB 495 - Provide for Rabies Vaccination. Recently, the RiverStone Board of Health passed a domestic animal rabies vaccination requirement for Yellowstone County bringing all cities and towns within the county under one rule. HB 495 would ensure statewide rabies vaccination.

Meeting the recommendations set forth by the State Veterinarians Association, HB495 is an animal health and safety measure requiring domestic animals to be vaccinated against the deadly disease rabies by the time the animal is four months old. Rabies is always fatal to animals and can be fatal for people unless costly injections are administered before rabies symptoms appear.

With the growing popularity of dog parks and people taking their pets hiking, hunting, and for walks in neighborhoods, the possibility of spreading animal and zoonotic diseases are increasing. Passing HB 495 will help ensure animal as well as public health and safety.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 495. I look forward to working with you on this and other important public health and safety measures. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at barbara.sch@riverstonehealth.org or 651-6420.

Sincerely,

Barbara Schneeman, Director
Communication & Advocacy

Cc: Representatives Virginia Court, Christy Clark, Kathleen Williams, Joanne Blyton, Wylie Galt, David Halvorson, Greg Hertz, Krayton Kerns, Mike Lang, Dennis Lenz, Ryan Lynch, Margie MacDonald, Carolyn Pease-Lopez, Rae Peppers, Gordon Pierson, Alan Redfield, Dan Salomon